

Message Text

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SUBJ: GOI KNESSET STATEMENT ON SOVIET REJECTION OF
TRADE AGREEMENT WITH US AND EFFECT ON EMIGRATION
OF SOVIET JEWS

1. FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF SUBSTANTIVE PORTION OF STATEMENT
MADE IN KNESSET JANUARY 22 BY FONMIN ALLON ON SOVIET
REJECTION OF TRADE AGREEMENT WITH US AND ITS EFFECT ON
EMIGRATION OF SOVIET JEWS. STATEMENT WAS IN RESPONSE TO
MOTIONS TO DISCUSS MATTER SUBMITTED BY FOUR DIFFERENT
PARTIES.

2. BEGIN TEXT. I OF COURSE SHARE THE CONCERN VOICED BY THE
KNESSET MEMBERS WHO SPOKE BEFORE ME, OVER THE POSSIBLE
HARM TO THE FATE OF IMMIGRATION FROM THE SOVIET UNION, WHICH
MIGHT BE CAUSED BY THE POSTPONEMENT OF THE IMPLEMENTATION
OF THE TRADE AGREEMENT. IT IS NO SECRET THAT THE UNDER-
STANDING REACHED AT THE TIME BY THE US AND THE SOVIET UNION
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UNDER THE TRADE AGREEMENT, GAVE US GREAT HOPES WITH RESPECT

TO THE UNHAMPERED EMIGRATION RIGHTS OF SOVIET JEWS. WE CONSIDERED THIS, AND RIGHTFULLY SO, AN IMPORTANT ACHIEVEMENT TOWARDS WIDENING THE GATES OF IMMIGRATION TO ISRAEL FOR JEWS FROM THE SOVIET UNION--AND WE EXPRESSED OUR APPRECIATION TO ALL THE AMERICAN POLITICIANS WHO WERE INVOLVED--FROM THE KNESSET ROSTRUM.

3. THE CONCERN IS THEREFORE UNDERSTANDABLE. PERMIT ME, HOWEVER, TO RECALL THAT THE INTENSIVE CAMPAIGN FOR THE IMMIGRATION OF SOVIET JEWS PRECEDED, BY FAR, THE TALKS ON VARIOUS TRADE AGREEMENTS. ALSO THE ACHIEVEMENTS RESULTING FROM THIS CAMPAIGN--THE OPENING OF THE GATES OF THE SOVIET UNION FOR THE EMIGRATION OF JEWS IN GREATER NUMBERS THAN EVER BEFORE--PRECEDED THE TALKS ON THE TRADE AGREEMENT BY A NUMBER OF YEARS.

4. IT WAS HOPED THAT THE TRADE AGREEMENT WOULD GIVE FRESH MOMENTUM TO IMMIGRATION FROM THE SOVIET UNION, AND THAT IT WOULD SERVE AS A NEW PHASE--FREER AND MORE EXTENSIVE THAN ITS PREDECESSOR. HOWEVER, ITS COLLAPSE--OR MORE ACCURATELY, THE POSTPONEMENT OF ITS IMPLEMENTATION--OUGHT NOT NECESSARILY BE HARMFUL TO THE RIGHTS OF SOVIET JEWS TO IMMIGRATE TO ISRAEL. I DO NOT BELIEVE THAT THE ARTICLE PERTAINING TO THE IMMIGRATION RIGHTS OF SOVIET JEWS WAS A CONTRIBUTING FACTOR IN THE SOVIET DECISION TO POSTPONE THE TRADE AGREEMENT--AND I SHOULD LIKE TO BELIEVE AND HOPE THAT THIS POSTPONEMENT WILL NOT INTERFERE WITH THE LONG OVERDUE PERMISSION FOR OUR SOVIET BRETHREN TO IMMIGRATE.

5. AFTER ALL, THE SOVIET UNION--A POWER COMPOSED OF MANY NATIONS--CANNOT AND MUST NOT IGNORE THE ENDEAVOURS OF THE MEMBERS OF THE JEWISH NATION TO LEAD A FULL, JEWISH LIFE IN ITS HISTORICAL HOMELAND. SHE CANNOT SOLVE THE PROBLEM OF THE RIGHTS OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE IN THE SOVIET UNION--WHICH IS AN EXCEPTIONAL PROBLEM FROM THE NATIONAL POINT OF VIEW--BY MEASURES DEVIATING FROM HUMANE AND MORAL NORMS. GRANTING PERMISSION TO JEWS WHO SO DESIRE TO EMIGRATE TO ISRAEL WILL, AFTER ALL, SOLVE NOT ONLY AN EXTREMELY PAINFUL JEWISH PROBLEM. THIS IS ALSO THE ONLY SOLUTION OF A DOMESTIC PROBLEM WHICH THE SOVIET UNION HAS TRIED IN VAIN TO SOLVE FOR MANY YEARS. I
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BELIEVE AND TRUST THAT THIS BASIC TRUTH--ACCOMPANIED, AS IT IS, BY THE UNCEASING STRUGGLE OF SOVIET JEWRY INSIDE THE SOVIET UNION, AND OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE, TOGETHER WITH ALL ENLIGHTENED FACTORS IN THE WORLD, WILL TIP THE SCALES IN FAVOUR OF OUR BRETHREN, THE JEWS OF RUSSIA.

6. MEMBERS OF THE KNESSET,
THE NEWS OF THE SOVIET REJECTION OF THE TRADE AGREEMENT

REACHED ME DURING MY RECENT VISIT TO THE US. OBVIOUSLY THIS WAS AN IMPORTANT SUBJECT IN MY WASHINGTON TALKS WITH PRESIDENT FORD AND SECRETARY OF STATE KISSINGER, AND I MAY STATE WITH SATISFACTION THAT THEY SHOWED THEMSELVES MOST APPRECIATIVE OF OUR CONCERN OVER THE FATE OF SOVIET JEWRY, AND READY TO CONTINUE THEIR ASSISTANCE IN THIS MATTER.

7. IT WOULD BE A MISTAKE TO TIE THE QUESTION OF IMMIGRATION FROM THE SOVIET UNION TO THE DEBATE ON ISRAEL'S FOREIGN POLICY, AS THOSE QUESTIONS ARE NEITHER CONNECTED NOR INTERDEPENDENT. THE RIGHT OF SOVIET JEWS TO COME TO ISRAEL IS A HUMAN RIGHT, AND ELEMENTARY MORAL AND NATIONAL RIGHT, ABOVE CURRENT AFFAIRS AMONG GOVERNMENTS.

8. IN CONCLUSION: WE WANT TO BELIEVE AND HOPE THAT THE SOVIET UNION--WHICH IN THE PAST HAS PERMITTED THE IMMIGRATION TO ISRAEL OF TENS OF THOUSANDS OF JEWS, ALTHOUGH FAR LESS THEN THE NUMBER OF APPLICANTS--WILL IN FUTURE PERMIT EVERY JEW DESIRING TO DO SO TO EMIGRATE TO ISRAEL. HOWEVER, SHOULD THE SOVIET AUTHORITIES DECIDE TO BLAME SOVIET JEWRY FOR THEIR DISAPPOINTMENT WITH THE TRADE LEGISLATION, AND ATTEMPT TO ERECT AN 'IRON CURTAIN' BETWEEN SOVIET JEWRY AND THE REST OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE--THEN THIS PEOPLE AS A WHOLE, AND ITS COUNTRY, THE STATE OF ISRAEL, WILL RALLY TO A PERSISTANT AND CONTINUOUS, MORAL AND POLITICAL STRUGGLE IN THE DIASPORA AND AMONG THE ENLIGHTENED NATIONS OF THE WORLD, IN ORDER TO PREVENT A GREAT TRAGEDY, WHICH MAY BEFALL THIS ENDANGERED JEWRY. WITH THIS ASPECT IN VIEW, I HAVE ALREADY HAD FIRST CONSULTATIONS WITH THE LEADERS OF THE PRESIDENTS' CONFERENCE OF JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS IN THE US, WHO ARE PREPARED TO LEND FULL SUPPORT TO ANY ACTION THAT MAY BE REQUIRED.

9. THE FATE OF SOVIET JEWRY AND ITS RIGHT TO UNHINDERED
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IMMIGRATION TO ISRAEL HAS BEEN, AND WILL CONTINUE TO BE, A CENTRAL ISSUE OF THE HIGHEST PRIORITY FOR THE GOVERNMENT AND PEOPLE OF ISRAEL. I AM CONVINCED THAT IT WILL REMAIN SUCH AN ISSUE ALSO FOR THE ENTIRE JEWISH PEOPLE, WITH ALL THE MORAL AND POLITICAL FORCES WHOSE SUPPORT IT CAN MUSTER THROUGHOUT THE WORLD. END QUOTE.
VELIOTES

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